

## HOME: Finding your Spouse

### Bible Glossary, People & Places

#### Abraham

##### Sermon Reference

Abraham is mentioned as the patriarch who sends his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac. He is described as blessed abundantly by God and concerned with securing a suitable spouse for the continuation of his lineage.

##### Background Context

Abraham, originally named Abram, is a seminal figure in the Bible and a pivotal patriarch in the history of faith Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He lived during the early 2nd millennium BC, considered in biblical chronology to be the founding father of the Israelite nation through his son Isaac. His story begins in Ur of the Chaldeans, in Mesopotamia, and God called him to leave his home and kindred to establish a new covenant people in the land of Canaan. This call and his obedience mark Abraham as a foundational figure of faith and trust in God's promises (Genesis 12). Abraham's significance extends beyond his immediate family; he is recognized as the recipient of divine promises that he would be the father of a great nation, that his descendants would inherit Canaan, and through him all nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:2-3, 17:4-5). These promises underpin the theological framework of God's covenant relationship with His people, informing much of the biblical narrative.

In the context of marriage and lineage, Abraham's concern for the purity and faithfulness of the covenant people is evident. He sought to prevent Isaac from marrying a Canaanite woman, fearing idolatry and disobedience to God among the Canaanite tribes (Genesis 24). This highlights a key moment where the faithfulness of the people to God's covenant hinges on marital alliances, showing the intersection of divine promises with social customs and family responsibilities. Sending his servant to find Isaac a wife from his own kin in Haran was a deliberate act to preserve the integrity of the covenant lineage. Abraham's narrative is foundational for understanding God's unfolding redemptive plan through generations, specifically towards the Messiah, who would come from this line. His faith and actions set a precedent for faithfulness and obedience, particularly illuminated in how marriage and family relationships serve the larger purposes of God's kingdom. The servant's mission to find Rebekah as Isaac's wife demonstrates the continuation of Abraham's concern for covenantal fidelity and God's providence.

## Importance in the Bible

Abraham stands as a patriarch whose faith established the defining covenant relationship between God and His people. His decision to ensure Isaac's marriage aligned with God's covenantal promises underscores marriage's role as integral to God's plan for His people. Abraham's faithfulness and God's blessings on his lineage formed the basis for the nation of Israel, the unfolding Messianic line, and a living example of trust in God's guidance. His story confirms that spiritual priorities must guide personal and familial decisions, a theme acutely relevant in discussions about choosing a spouse.

## Isaac

### Sermon Reference

Isaac is the son of Abraham for whom a suitable wife must be found. His marriage to Rebekah is pivotal in continuing Abraham's lineage and carrying forward God's promises.

### Background Context

Isaac, son of Abraham and Sarah, is a foundational figure in the biblical narrative of covenant and promise. Born in Abraham and Sarah's old age as a fulfillment of God's promise, Isaac represents the continuation of God's covenant with Abraham. His birth story, remarkable for occurring when Sarah was well beyond childbearing years, serves as a testament to God's power and faithfulness (Genesis 21).

Isaac's life is marked by pivotal events elucidating the development of God's covenantal people. His near-sacrifice by Abraham on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22) exemplifies profound faith and obedience. The covenant is reaffirmed to Isaac by God, who reiterates the promises made to Abraham, emphasizing that Isaac is the child through whom God's purposes will continue (Genesis 26).

Choosing a wife for Isaac holds deep spiritual significance, as his wife must uphold the covenant values to ensure the faithfulness of the people. His union with Rebekah, arranged through Abraham's servant, is more than a mere marital alliance; it is a divine appointment for securing the destiny of the covenant children. Isaac's life bridges Abraham's legacy and the next generation, with his sons Esau and Jacob shaping Israel's eventual tribal structure. Isaac's position in the biblical narrative reflects themes of God's providence, faith, and continuation of promises. His marriage to Rebekah contributes directly to the Messianic lineage, as Christ's genealogy is traced through Isaac. Thus, Isaac is an essential link in God's redemptive purposes and an example of divine faithfulness manifesting through a godly family line.

## Importance in the Bible

Isaac embodies the covenant promise that God made to Abraham, serving as the link in the Messianic genealogy. His marriage and progeny are significant for the spiritual identity and destiny of God's chosen people. Isaac's example highlights the importance of selecting a spouse aligned with faith to preserve the covenant's purity and continuity, reinforcing that marriage has divine implications beyond the individual.

# Rebekah

## Sermon Reference

Rebekah is the young woman chosen as the wife of Isaac by Abraham's servant. She demonstrates qualities such as godliness, industriousness, purity, and faithfulness. She agrees to leave her homeland to embark on the adventure of life with Isaac.

## Background Context

Rebekah, introduced in Genesis chapter 24, is a canonical example of a godly woman who becomes pivotal in the unfolding of God's covenant people. She is the daughter of Bethuel and a relative of Abraham, living in Aram Naharaim (Haran). Her introduction in Scripture emphasizes her beauty, virtue, and servant's heart, traits that become central to the qualities sought for a wife of Isaac. Her willingness to leave her family and homeland upon the servant's request highlights her faith and commitment to God's plan.

Rebekah's narrative illustrates divine providence and the principle that God guides His people's decisions, especially in matters significant to His covenant. Abraham's servant prays for God to reveal the right wife by a specific sign at the well, and Rebekah meets this exact sign by offering water both to the servant and his camels. This moment underscores the importance of seeking God's guidance in decisions, a theme the sermon emphasizes in selecting a spouse. Her beauty is matched by her virtue—as a virgin and a young woman who embraces God's calling, she embodies the Proverbs 31 ideal: 'Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised' (Proverbs 31:30). Rebekah's character and actions demonstrate that godliness and obedience to God's leading are essential qualities for a spouse.

Her subsequent marriage to Isaac secures the continuation of Abraham's lineage and God's promises. Rebekah's role in the broader biblical narrative is deepened by her mothering of Esau and Jacob, children central to Israel's history. Her story also demonstrates the necessity of faith, courage, and willingness to step into God's plans, key lessons for anyone contemplating marriage. Her journey reflects not merely a marriage but participation in divine history that shapes Israel and the Messianic line.

## Importance in the Bible

Rebekah is a vital link in the covenantal lineage, chosen through divine providence to marry Isaac and mother the patriarchs Esau and Jacob. Her willingness to follow God's direction models faith-driven decision-making. She exemplifies the virtues of purity, industriousness, and reverence for the Lord, demonstrating that marriage is a sacred adventure aligned with God's covenant purposes.

# Naomi

## Sermon Reference

Naomi is the mother-in-law to Ruth. She is widowed and returns to Bethlehem from Moab. She plays a guiding role in encouraging Ruth to seek marriage with Boaz, a relative and kinsman redeemer.

## Background Context

Naomi's story unfolds in the opening chapter of the book of Ruth, during a time of famine in Bethlehem, which prompts her family to move to Moab. As a widow whose two sons also die, she faces profound personal loss. Naomi's story portrays themes of suffering, faith, and restoration, which are dramatically expressed through her return to Bethlehem accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth. Her life exemplifies resilience and trust in God amid adversity (Ruth 1).

Upon returning to Bethlehem, Naomi assumes a proactive role in securing Ruth's future amid uncertain circumstances. She counsels Ruth to seek marriage with Boaz, a close relative of Naomi's deceased husband and a man who fulfills the role of kinsman redeemer. This deliberate act reflects Naomi's wisdom and understanding of the familial and cultural systems in place to protect widows and maintain family inheritance (Ruth 3). Naomi's cultural and familial context is crucial for understanding the significance of the kinsman redeemer principle—where a close relative compensates for the loss of a male provider, ensuring property rights and the survival of the family line. Naomi's partnership with Ruth and Boaz prefigures themes of redemption, faithfulness, and God's providential care that resonate throughout biblical theology.

Her story also represents the restoration not only of family but of hope and blessing, as the offspring from Ruth and Boaz's union become part of the Messianic lineage culminating in King David and ultimately Jesus Christ. Naomi's narrative denotes the integration of faith, family, and God's redemptive plan in personal circumstances, a profound backdrop for discussions on marriage and God's providence in choosing a spouse.

## Importance in the Bible

Naomi is instrumental in the narrative of redemption within the book of Ruth, directing the course of events that lead to Ruth's marriage to Boaz and the continuation of the covenant line. Her story models faith in God's provision and the power of wise, godly guidance in family decisions. Through Naomi, the Bible teaches about God's redemptive care operating even in loss and the critical role of marriage within God's covenant community.

# Ruth

## Sermon Reference

Ruth is a Moabite daughter-in-law to Naomi who remains faithful to her mother-in-law and seeks marriage with Boaz. Ruth embodies loyalty, faithfulness, and godliness, and her marriage to Boaz secures a place in the Messianic lineage.

## Background Context

Ruth is a Moabite woman introduced in the Old Testament book that bears her name. She stands out as an extraordinary example of loyalty, faith, and trust in God despite cultural norms and personal hardship. Upon the death of her husband, a son of Naomi, Ruth pledges allegiance to her mother-in-law, famously declaring, 'Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay' (Ruth 1:16). This declaration signals her commitment not only to Naomi but to the God of Israel and His covenant people.

Her story unfolds within the cultural context of levirate marriage and kinsman redeemer customs, which serve to protect family lineage and property. Ruth's initiative to glean in Boaz's fields and her respect for Naomi's guidance reveal a woman with virtue, courage, and wisdom. Through these acts, she becomes integrated into the community of Israel, exemplifying God's grace extended beyond Israelite ethnicity to a faithful Gentile. Ruth's marriage to Boaz secures her provision and perpetuates the covenant line. Her union is celebrated as a divine appointment resulting in the birth of Obed, grandfather of King David, situating her directly in the Messianic genealogy. This inclusion underscores God's sovereignty and grace in embracing those outside Israel who demonstrate faith and obedience. Ruth's story thus has far-reaching theological implications for inclusion, redemption, and God's providential working through marriage and family.

Her character, marked by kindness, loyalty, and faith in God's provision, offers profound insights into godly marriage. Ruth's journey from widowhood and exile to becoming an honored ancestor of David (and ultimately Jesus) illustrates the power of divine guidance and faithful partnership. Her narrative serves as a timeless model for believers on the importance of faith and steadfastness in choosing a spouse and navigating life's trials together.

## Importance in the Bible

Ruth is a key figure demonstrating faithfulness and God's providence extending beyond Israel's borders. Her story is pivotal in the lineage of King David and the Messiah. Ruth's loyalty and strategic submission to God's covenant mechanisms through marriage highlight the sacredness of marital partnership and its role in God's redemptive plan. Her example encourages believers to choose spouses aligned with faith and to trust God's guidance in life's journey.

# Boaz

## Sermon Reference

Boaz is the kinsman redeemer who marries Ruth. He is described as a man of standing, integrity, kindness, generosity, and strength in the Lord. He protects and provides for Ruth and is instrumental in redeeming Naomi's family.

## Background Context

Boaz appears in the book of Ruth as a wealthy and honorable man from Bethlehem who fulfills the role of a kinsman redeemer, a legal and familial obligation within Israelite custom. This role included redeeming relatives from poverty or enslavement by purchasing property or marrying widows to preserve family lines and inheritance rights (Ruth 4). Boaz's integrity, generosity, and faithfulness set him apart as a paragon of godly character.

His encounter with Ruth, a Moabite widow gleaning in his fields, marks a turning point showcasing his kindness and protection of the vulnerable. Boaz invites Ruth to partake in his provision, speaks gently to her, and extends generosity that transcends social expectations. His willingness to marry Ruth not only restores her but redeems Naomi's family estate, illustrating the intersection of social justice and divine providence in biblical law.

Boaz's standing in the community as a man of reputation, respect, and godliness further establishes the importance of choosing a spouse with integrity and alignment to God's principles. His actions reveal a heart committed to righteousness and compassion, qualities that make him an ideal partner and leader. Boaz's union with Ruth is celebrated within Scripture as an act of faithfulness that preserves and advances God's redemptive plan. Importantly, Boaz's lineage places him in the Messianic genealogy, as the great-grandfather of King David, underscoring the theme of divine orchestration in marriage and family history. His story highlights how faithfulness, providence, and covenant obligations within marriage serve God's larger purpose to bless and redeem His people.

## Importance in the Bible

Boaz exemplifies integrity, generosity, and godly leadership as a kinsman redeemer, fulfilling critical family and covenantal roles. His marriage to Ruth successfully redeems their family line and sets the foundation for King David's lineage and ultimately the Messiah. Boaz's life serves as a benchmark for men of faith in marriage—those who provide, protect, and lead with kindness and strength, stewarding God's purposes within the family and community.

# Haran

## Sermon Reference

Haran is the region to which Abraham's servant traveled to find a wife for Isaac, specifically the area of Nahor where Abraham and his relatives originally lived.

## Background Context

Haran is a city and region mentioned several times in the Old Testament as the place where Abraham's family settled before moving to Canaan. Located in upper Mesopotamia, likely in modern-day southeast Turkey or northern Syria, Haran served as a temporary home for Abraham's extended family and descendants. The Bible frequently notes Haran as a place of familial origin for Abraham's relatives (Genesis 11:31-32, 12:4-5). The significance of Haran in biblical history is its function as a crossroads between the Mesopotamian world and the land of Canaan. It represents both a place of departure and return for Abraham's household. Importantly, it is from Haran that Abraham's servant is sent back to find a wife for Isaac, highlighting the region as a source of covenantally suitable spouses and underscoring the importance of maintaining cultural and spiritual lineage by seeking wives "from among Abraham's relatives" rather than from Canaanites (Genesis 24).

Haran's role also illustrates tensions between faithfulness to God's promises and geographic-political realities. Abraham's avoidance of marrying Canaanite women reflects concerns about idolatry and covenant purity, and Haran represents the closest source of kinship for ensuring continuity of faith. Thus, Haran is more than a place; it is a symbol of ancestral roots and Covenant identity preservation. From a theological perspective, Haran serves as a stage where divine providence unfolds through human obedience and cultural heritage. The journey to Haran to find a spouse for Isaac exemplifies God's guidance within family and cultural parameters, reinforcing that God's plans often work through established relationships and the faithfulness of previous generations.

## Importance in the Bible

Haran is foundational as the ancestral home of Abraham's family and plays a pivotal role in logistic and spiritual decisions regarding marriage and covenant faithfulness. It symbolizes God's preservation of His promises through the faithfulness of kinship ties and illustrates God's providential work in guiding decisions vital to covenant continuity, including the selection of Isaac's wife.

# Moab

## Sermon Reference

Moab is the land where Naomi and her family sojourned during famine in Bethlehem. It is also the homeland of Ruth and Orpah, Naomi's daughters-in-law.

## Background Context

Moab is a territory east of the Dead Sea, historically inhabited by the Moabites, descendants of Lot through his elder daughter (Genesis 19). The land and people figure critically in biblical narratives involving Israel's neighbors and occasional adversaries. Moab's geography and distinct ethnicity set it apart from Israel, often representing both danger and refuge in the biblical storyline. In the book of Ruth, Moab is depicted as a place of exile and hardship for Naomi's family during a famine in Bethlehem. This diaspora abroad contrasts with Naomi's intention to return to her ancestral land once conditions improve (Ruth 1). Moab's importance stems not only from its role as a place of temporary refuge but as the cultural home of Ruth and Orpah, whom Isaac's family married into. The presence of Israelite widows in Moab underscores the interconnected relationships between the Israelites and neighboring nations, often fraught with spiritual and cultural risk given Moab's idolatry.

The biblical view of Moab is complex—it is both a land of alien customs and the origin of a woman, Ruth, whose faithfulness and incorporation into Israel's covenant community become redemptive. This tension captures the divine theme of grace extending beyond ethnic boundaries when individuals embrace the God of Israel. Ruth's Moabite identity highlights God's sovereignty in incorporating Gentiles into His redemptive plan through marriage and faith. Historically and theologically, Moab serves to remind readers that God's blessings and covenants are not limited by geographic or ethnic boundaries but are fulfilled through faithful individuals stepping into His promises. The narrative involving Naomi and Ruth from Moab returning and integrating into Israel forms a critical juncture for understanding inclusion, redemption, and God's providential design in family and marriage.

## Importance in the Bible

Moab is significant as the setting for the exile and return of Naomi and as the homeland of Ruth, whose faith and marriage to Boaz integrate Gentiles into the Messianic line. It encapsulates themes of faith beyond ethnic lines, redemption, and God's providential unfolding of His covenant. Moab's presence in the biblical narrative emphasizes the inclusivity of God's plan and the vital role of marriage as a means of divine grace.

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